

SECTION 19 - MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION MULTIDOSE VIALS. DROPPERS. UNIT DOSE AMPULES/SYRINGES

I. GENERAL.

To establish a uniform policy on shelf life and handling of all multidose vials, unit dose ampules, and single dose medications in use in the DHCS.

II. SPECIFIC.

A. DHCS personnel NO LONGER need to date and initial multi-dose vials when they are opened. Recent studies conducted in large, United States medical centers revealed that continued use of (multiple entries into) multiple dose vials do not appear to become contaminated regardless of how long they are used. Policies that mandate arbitrary disposal dates, to prevent possible contamination/infections, therefore, are not only unnecessary, but are not cost effective.

B. Multi-dose vials will be discarded when they are empty or when the manufacturer's expiration date is reached, whichever comes first.

C. Multiple dose/multi-dose medication vials must be handled IAW the manufacturer's instructions to include:

1. Aseptic technique is always used. Wipe the top of the vial adapter's access port with 70% isopropyl alcohol and allow it to dry for one minute prior to withdrawing the fluid.

2. Visual inspection of the vial should be accomplished each time medication is withdrawn to determine that the stopper is intact and that no unusual particulate matter is in the vial. Check the vial for turbidity, discoloration, and integrity of rubber stopper seal.

3. A sterile unused vial adapter will be used for each bottle.

4. Avoid opening more than one multidose vial of the same medication at the same time.

5. Refrigeration of opened multidose vials is product specific (i.e., insulin, heparin, etc., will be refrigerated). Routine refrigeration of opened multidose vials is not recommended. Read the label.

C. SINGLE USE

1. Single use parenteral drugs do not contain preservatives and should be immediately discarded by the original user after the dose is withdrawn. Those vials containing medications that have *limited storage capability* should be dated and initialed and disposed of IAW the manufacturer's recommended instructions.

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2. Single dose containers are preferred over multidose containers. If this is not possible, the smallest multidose container available should be used. This lessens the risk of contamination/cross-contamination.

3. A sterile needle and syringe must be used to withdraw the required amount of medication from single dose vials.

4. Unit dose glass ampules/syringes are specifically designed for single dose only. Any unused portions of medications must be discarded immediately and not left on the unit for any period of time.

5. For withdrawing medication from single dose glass ampules use a 0.5 micron filter needle. The filter needle will prevent minute particles of glass from entering the syringe. Prior to administration of the medication to the patient the filter needle must be replaced with a regular sterile needle for parenteral injection or a needleless adapter for piggyback use.

D. PRECAUTIONS FOR MAINTAINING DRUG INTEGRITY.

1. All drugs will be clearly labeled. The identification of a drug shall not be assumed if unlabeled. When drugs are unlabeled or labels are defaced, these drugs will not be used.

2. Instructions on drugs should be read carefully to determine the temperature range at which the drugs are to be kept. Some medication are clearly labeled: DO NOT REFRIGERATE. Thus the refrigerator should not be used arbitrarily as a storage place for drugs.

3. All drugs will be checked prior to use and monthly for expiration to ensure that outdated drugs are not used. If drugs have only lot number but no expiration date, the lot number may be checked by pharmacy for expiration date. A multidose vial labeled to expire in a given month will expire on the **last day of that month**.

4. Expired multidose vials will be returned to Pharmacy and disposed according to pharmacy policy.

E. MULTIDOSE OPHTHALMIC DROPS

1. Multidose Ophthalmic Drops for inpatients may be ordered from unit dose and used only for that patient.

2. Other multidose ophthalmic drops may be used for more than one patient provided the dropper surface is not contaminated.